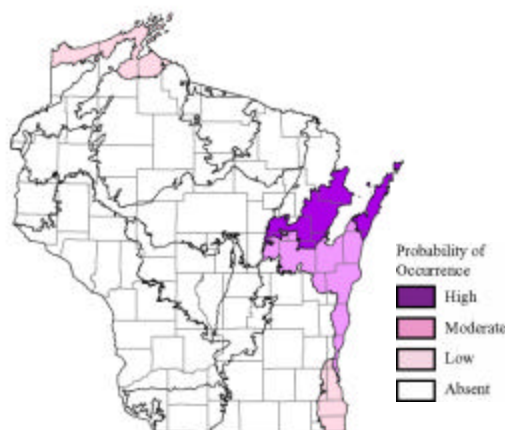


Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*)

Species Assessment Scores*

State rarity:	5
State threats:	3
State population trend:	3
Global abundance:	4
Global distribution:	2
Global threats:	3
Global population trend:	1
Mean Risk Score:	3
Area of importance:	2

* Please see the [Description of Vertebrate Species Summaries \(Section 3.1.1\)](#) for definitions of criteria and scores.



Ecological Landscape Associations

Please note that this is not a range map. Shading does not imply that the species is present throughout the Landscape, but represents the probability that the species occurs somewhere in the Landscape.

Landscape-community Combinations of Highest Ecological Priority

Ecological Landscape	Community
Central Lake Michigan Coastal	Great lakes beach
Central Lake Michigan Coastal	Lake Michigan
Central Lake Michigan Coastal	Submergent marsh
Northern Lake Michigan Coastal	Great lakes beach
Northern Lake Michigan Coastal	Impoundments/Reservoirs
Northern Lake Michigan Coastal	Lake Michigan
Northern Lake Michigan Coastal	Submergent marsh
Southern Lake Michigan Coastal	Great lakes beach
Southern Lake Michigan Coastal	Lake Michigan
Superior Coastal Plain	Great lakes beach
Superior Coastal Plain	Lake Superior
Superior Coastal Plain	Submergent marsh

Threats and Issues

- Caspian Terns require sparsely vegetated substrates, typically on islands associated with large inland lakes and the Great Lakes. Vegetative succession reduces or eliminates breeding habitat availability.
- Habitat loss and competition for nest sites with Ring-billed Gulls and Herring Gulls
- Mammalian predation of eggs or young - especially mink (and to a lesser extent avian predation, especially migrant Ruddy Turnstones that predate eggs)
- Prolonged inclement weather and associated high wave action
- Coastal development may impact tern colony sites by reducing or eliminating potential breeding habitat. Associated with development may be a greater threat of human disturbance.
- Since the early 1970s, organochlorine and other chemical contaminants, such as PCBs and DDE (DDE concentrations exceeding 4 ppm in eggs) have affected Common Tern eggshell thickness and structure, caused various eye, bill, and feet deformities, and contributed to aberrant behaviors of

breeding adults. It is likely that Caspian Terns have been affected by chemical contaminants in similar ways.

- Caspian Terns formerly nested on sandy peninsulas or islands accessible by recreating humans. These sites have been all but abandoned by breeding terns. Nesting Caspian Terns are now largely restricted to dredge-spoil islands, a managed former pier remnant, or remote gravel islands.

Priority Conservation Actions

- Long-term conservation and management of dredge spoil sites and other island sites that can be all or partially managed for nesting Caspian Terns is recommended. Managing inland and coastal, sparsely vegetated, island sites for both Caspian and Common Terns as part of an ecosystem approach to species restoration and recovery is recommended. The use of tern decoys and sound systems may help attract both species to potential breeding habitat.
- The long-term use, and planning for, dredge spoil sites should include a component for tern management.
- Regulations that limit/monitor/prevent the presence of organochlorine contaminants as part of an overall strategy to monitor contaminant loads in coastal ecosystems are recommended.
- Research, training, and communication that identifies Caspian and Common terns as integral components of coastal ecosystems will aid conservation and management.
- Public education programs and presentations of long-term tern monitoring efforts will reinforce the importance of both species to coastal environments, particularly along the Great Lakes.
- Partnerships between state and federal agencies and private organizations dedicated to the conservation of coastal ecosystems will benefit the long-term management of both Caspian and Common Terns.